

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 11501

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CG, MOPS, PINS, XA, FR, BE
SUBJECT: AFRICAN MUTUAL DEFENSE FORCE

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM UPI-BASED STORY WHICH
HAS COME TO ATTENTION OF USDEL TO BRUSSELS MEETING
ON ZAIRE:

QUOTE. FRANCE AND BELGIUM WILL TRAIN AN ELITE 15,000-
MAN STRIKE FORCE FOR ZAIRE, CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT HOT-
PURSUIT RAIDS INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, MILITARY
OFFICIALS SAID YESTERDAY.

THE SPECIAL UNIT EVENTUALLY WILL REPLACE THE 2,700-MAN
INTER-AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING FORCE NOW BEING FLOWN IN
BY U.S. TRANSPORTS AND ASSEMBLED TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S
TROUBLED SOUTHERN COPPER BELT, THE OFFICIALS SAID.

PRESIDENT MOBUTU SESE SEKO, IN A WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW
WITH JOURNALISTS, HAD ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THE
NEW UNIT FRIDAY. HE SAID IT WOULD HAVE "RETALIATORY
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CAPACITY" - A CLEAR WARNING TO NEIGHBORING ANGOLA,
WHICH REBELS HAVE USED FOR 15 MONTHS TO LAUNCH DEVASTATING
STRIKES ON ZAIRE'S SOUTHEASTERN SHABA PROVINCE.

INDEPENDENT MILITARY ANALYSTS SAW THE NEW FORCE AS A FIRST
STEP TOWARD TOTALLY REBUILDING ZAIRE'S DEMORALIZED AND
DISCREDITED 50,000-MAN ARMY.

MILITARY OFFICIALS SAID BELGIUM WOULD TRAIN A NEW 12,000-MAN ZAIRIAN INFANTRY DIVISION DRAWN BOTH FROM THE EXISTING ZAIRIAN ARMY AND FROM NEW RECRUITS.

FRANCE WOULD SPEED UP A PROGRAM TO TRAIN A 3,000-MAN AIRBORNE BRIGADE AND TWO OTHER SPECIAL BATTALIONS, THEY SAID. END QUOTE.

2. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY THERE IS A NEED TO UNDERTAKE RETRAINING AND REORGANIZATION FOR LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTENANCE OF ZAIRE'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS KIND OF TALK DOES NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR OBJECTIVE OF STABILITY IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REGION. CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE SHOULD REFLECT NOT ONLY THAT WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH PLANS BUT ALSO THAT THE EXTENT OF OUR OWN SUPPORTIVE ROLE HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE LIMITED STRICTLY TO THE IMMEDIATE SECURITY SITUATION IN SHABA, AS WE HAVE STATED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. CHAMBERS

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